

Message Text

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17

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 OMB-01 SAM-01 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 AID-05

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P R 130900Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2861

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0046

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO SS AG

SUBJECT: QADHAFI MAKES LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR POLISARIO FRONT
PUBLIC

1. SPEAKING TO A NATIONAL CONGRESS ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY 12, WHICH HE CALLED THE DAY OF THE EVACUATION OF THE LAST SPANISH SOLDIER FROM THE SAHARA, QADHAFI ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE POLISARIO FRONT IN ITS ARMED STRUGGLE AGAINST MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO.

2. QADHAFI LED UP TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY RECALLING THE HISTORY OF LIBYAN POLICY ON THE SPANISH SAHARA. IN 1972, HE HAD WARNED SPAIN THAT IF SPAIN DID NOT BEGIN TO WITHDRAW FROM THE TERRITORY BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, HE WOULD SUPPORT A WAR OF LIBERATION. IN 1973, LIBYAN WEAPONS AND TRAINING HAD FIRST BEEN PROVIDED TO THE NEWLY FORMED
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POLISARIO FRONT. HOLDING UP A FILE WHICH HE SAID

CONTAINED THE AMOUNTS OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION THE FRONT HAD RECEIVED FROM LIBYA THROUGH 1975, QADHAFI SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY DURING THIS TIME NO ARAB COUNTRY HAD ALLOWED THESE ARMS TO PASS THROUGH ITS TERRITORY, BUT LIBYA HAD NEVERTHELESS SENT SHIPMENTS BY LAND AND AIR, THROUGH LIBYAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS IN THE SAHARA. HE HAD TRIED TO CONVINCE OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES TO HELP SHARE THE BURDEN, BUT FOR "INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL REASONS" THEY HAD BEEN PREVENTED FROM DOING SO. AS A RESULT OF THE POPULAR WAR FOUGHT BY THE POLISARIO, SPAIN HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE TERRITORY. LIBYA HAD SPONSORED MEETINGS DURING 1975 BETWEEN MOROCCO, MAURITANIA, AND ALGERIA, BUT DESPITE LIBYAN EFFORTS THE CRISIS BETWEEN THESE COUNTRIES HAD WORSENERED WITH THE SIGNING OF THE TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT IN MADRID. QADHAFI HAD THEN HELD SEVERAL MEETINGS IN TRIPOLI AND BENGHAZI WITH THE HEAD OF THE POLISARIO FRONT TO TRY TO CONVINCE HIM TO GO ALONG WITH THE AGREEMENT. HE HAD SOUGHT ASSURANCES FROM KING HASSAN THAT THE POLISARIO FRONT LEADERS WOULD BE WELL TREATED, AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT THEY JOIN A MOROCCAN OPPOSITION PARTY. KING HASSAN HAD AGREED THAT THE POLISARIO FRONT COULD FORM A PARTY, BUT IT MUST RECOGNIZE MOROCCAN SOVEREIGNTY. THE POLISARIO FRONT HAD REFUSED TO CONSIDER THIS, AND HAD TOLD QADHAFI OF ITS DETERMINATION TO GO ON FIGHTING, WITH OR WITHOUT LIBYAN SUPPORT. QADHAFI COULD NOT FORCE THE SAHARAN PEOPLE TO BECOME MAURITANINA OR MOROCCAN AGAINST THEIR WILL. "IN THE FUTURE, THE LAR WILL NOT STANDY IDLY BY WHILE THE SAHARAN PEOPLE ARE SUBJECTED TO KILLING AND DISPERSION", QADHAFI SAID.

3. COMMENT: WHILE QADHAFI'S POSITION IS LESS THAN COMPLETELY COMMITTED TO ALGERIA, AND IS CAST IN TERMS OF CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE POLISARIO FRONT, HIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS CLEARLY AN ABANDONMENT OF PUBLIC LIBYAN NEUTRALITY BETWEEN MOROCCO-MAURITANIA AND ALGIERS ON THE SAHARA QUESTION, AND A CONCRETE RESULT OF THE CLOSER LIBYAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS HERALDED BY THE HASSI MESSAOUD COMMUNIQUE.

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